



Key Changes in DCR Landscape Designation Management Guidelines

May 2011

The following is an overview of themes reflected in public comments and suggestions that have been incorporated into the Management Guidelines. An important refinement to DCR's analysis for all three designations is that they are based on a new map of the ecosystems of the state completed by DCR with assistance from The Nature Conservancy (the Ecological Land Unit map).

Changes in All Three Designations

- Clarify the various planning processes and designations so that DCR planning is more efficient and easily understood.
- Explain how sensitive resources will be carefully protected during forest management and park management activities prior to the completion of Resource Management Plans.
- Clarify that invasive species management is a priority in all three designations.
- Explain more clearly the policy regarding commercial uses.
- Delete the summary charts – they were confusing and difficult to match to the more detailed guidelines text.
- Re-visit and review the three designations at least every ten years and if changes are desired to specific property designations, review proposed changes via a public process.
- Expand coordination with local communities (for example where changes in road or trail access are considered or management of forests that drain to municipal water supplies).
- Specify the circumstances where forest plantations may be restored to natural forests.

Changes in Reserves

- Use BioMap 2 as foundation for evaluating properties for Reserve designation including using smaller thresholds developed for “Forest Cores” for central and eastern Massachusetts.
- Clarify the role of the Forest Reserves Science Advisory Committee.

- Consider private conservation areas when designating Reserves (example the Wendell State Forest and the adjacent Whetstone Woods Massachusetts Audubon Sanctuary).

Changes in Parklands

- Specify the cases where vegetation management may occur in Parklands.

Changes in Woodlands

- Clarify that most harvest openings will be 1/3 acre and in limited, appropriate areas, after careful review, openings will be from 1/3 acre to 5 acres but none larger than 5 acres (as stated by the Patrick Administration in April 2010).
- Make clear that forest management will conform to the Appalachian Trail Corridor MOU.
- Explain how incentives for local forest products (harvesters or mills in DAR's Commonwealth Quality Program), Master Logger Certification (or equivalent system) and proven excellent work on given harvesting equipment will be used in the award of future timber sale contracts.
- Clarify the guideline with regard to whole tree harvesting and use of DCR forest product sales for biomass. Harvesting for biomass is not a DCR objective.
- Develop a pilot program for municipalities to manage small DCR Woodland designations as town demonstration forests and to support local economy.
- Clarify guidelines with regard to retention of trees in harvest areas for ecological and wildlife purposes.
- Explain the future status and expansion, where appropriate, of the Home Fuelwood Program in the Woodland designation and incorporate low income participants, where feasible.
- Consider improvement of OHV trails (closing poorly sited, eroding trails and creation of well-sited replacement trails) during harvesting projects, where feasible.